

Felix Grundy to Andrew Jackson, February 12, 1812, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

FELIX GRUNDY TO JACKSON.

Washington, February 12, 1812.

Dear Genl , On this day, I receiv'd, yr friendly communication and could I be with you, I could talk over many matters and things to much advantage, perhaps, to the Community but prudence forbids to commit to paper, fears, doubts conjectures, suspicions etc., etc. The Bill for raising 25,000 men has been a Law of the Land for about six weeks, and wonderfull, not a single officer except the Commander in Cheif is appointed. This is Henry Dearborne. Is there nothing rotten in Denmark? The Cabinet are in daily Council. Are they not examineing the papers in Wilkinsons Case to see whether he shall not be second in Command, and of course the Commander of the Southern and Western Armies? Should this be the case, It will damp the spirit of the nation much. This is mere conjecture, and untill I saw the Intelligencer of Today, I inclined to a beleif that, the British Minister and the Cabinet were negociating. The Volunteer Bill for accepting the service of 50,000 men has become a law, and the states are to officer these troops; of course, that is a matter, not to be acted on here. as soon as I can get a Copy of this law I will send it to you. In West Tenessee, we are only entituled to the Following officers in the 25,000. One Leiut Colo, 5 Capts. 4 first Lieuts 4 Second ditto, 3 ensigns. From all the applications made a selection has been made in the manner practised on such occasions and the following will no doubt be the appointments.

Wm P Anderson Colo Thomas Claiborne Robert Butler, Robert Desha Junior, of Sumner, Alexander Gray of Carthage, Francis Armstrong of Franklin County—Captains—Mr

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Reed of Nashville, Tilden Taylor of Sumner Don Carolus Dixon of Smith, Isaac Walton of Smith, first Lieuts. James H Gamble of Davidson, Avery Clark of Robertson, Mr Smith of Rutherford, (Bennetts son I understand) and some other not now recollected second Lieuts. Mr Harmon Hays could not be appointed more than an Ensign. There is a vacancy for a Surgeon's Mate, in my District. To whom can this be given? write to me, I shall keep it vacant untill I am advised.

This Congress will do more *harm* or *good* than any that has preceeded for some years, how things will end God only knows, for I answer no man here can tell how this Session will end. For my part, I shall endeavor to pursue a consistent course, and one which shall in my opinion promote the prosperity of the Country. A Seat in Congress, at present, is too responsible a Station to be even tolerably pleasant. A Bill for Classing and arming the whole body of the Militia has failed in the house of Representatives, it was lost by three votes only. A Bill is now before us, which will probably pass for arming them only. I was in favor of the first and of course shall vote for the latter, altho it is only half doing what ought to be done.

Silas Dinnsmore Esquire, has been the subject of one Conversation between the Secretary at War, Mr Poindexter¹ and myself. In that Mr Poindexter gave him a severe dressing, I shall in a day or two repeat it. I am much gratified at the disposition shewn by the Citizens of my District in Volunteering their services in behalf of their Country, It does them much honor, and I confess I feel my own pride increased in consequence of it. No man in Congress can say, that his Constituents have stepped forward in half so magnanimous a manner. To represent such a District would be an Honor to any man and you may rest assured, that my every exertion has been and shall be used to demonstrate to them, that however unqualified I am to be usefull, I am not deficient in a disposition to be so.

1 George Poindexter, a representative from Mississippi.

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Shall we have War? That is the question you want answered. *So, do, I*. I thought some time ago, there was no doubt. But, If in six weeks only one man out of 25,000 is furnished, how long will it take to furnish 25,000. See Mr Gallatin's Budgett; it talks, of Stamp duties, Excises, Direct Taxes etc., etc., etc. Did it not make its appearance at an unfortunate moment?

Mr Bacon² the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means has Just left my room and I now see a dreadfull storm a little a head. He says he will push his Tax Bills as hard and as fast as possible. I say to him, the question of War plainly and distinctly put shall go in front. In what a situation could this Country be, should a heavy system of Internal taxes be imposed and payment enforced. when the people of the United States were not compelled to have recourse to them for the purpose of avenging injuries inflicted by Foreign Nations, or in other words, in case we do not go to War. Would there not be danger of such a system becoming permanent? There is great intriguing for the Presidency going on. It seems to me, that Mr. Madisons situation is a very delicate one, but more of this by and by. You have heard, of the Newyork Mammoth Canal which the Legislature of Tenessee requested their members in Congress to support. Good Easy men, did they know that Dewitt Clinton lived in Newyork? that this was a mere electioneering hobby and in itself impracticable I presume had they known these things, they would hardly have wished us to support a project which would cost the U States ten millions of dollars and by which no other purpuse could be answered, except to increase the power of the northern Section of the Union.

² Ezekiel Bacon of Massachusetts, M. C. 1807–1813.